Toda

1: Rivers
101, 103

[For names, locations and distinctive features of Toda villages, see category 116, pp. 644-678]

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THE TODAS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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THE people whose manners and customs I am about to describe live on the undulating plateau of the Nilgiri Hills in Southern India. The hills were visited by a Portuguese missionary in 1602, and have been invaded by Indian tribes on various occasions, but, at the beginning of the last century, the plateau and its inhabitants were absolutely unknown to Europeans. The earliest definite information about the hills at this time is given in a letter from William Keys, an assistant revenue surveyor, written in 1812, but it was not till several years later that further information about the people began to be published.

Of the various tribes inhabiting the hills, the Todas excited the greatest interest, and this interest has continued, partly because the people are so different from any other of the races by which they are surrounded, but still more because both they and their customs are so picturesque and, in many ways, so unique.

A very large literature[1] has accumulated about the Todas and their customs. This literature is so extensive that when I determined to go to the Nilgiri Hills, I was reproached by more than one anthropologist for going to people about whom we already knew so much; and one even said that, so far as his department of knowledge was concerned, he was sure that we had all the information we could expect to get.

[1] The bibliography of this literature is given in Appendix II.

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177 not been complete, and that the hills have been invaded by strangers, especially from the side of the Wainad; but the isolation has probably been considerable, and, for long periods, it may have been complete.

101 177 In their isolation from the world in general, however, the Todas have not been alone. Two other tribes, the Kotas and the Badagas, occupy the plateau with them, and the peculiar relations between the three tribes are among the most interesting features of the social life of the Nilgiris. The Todas are a purely pastoral people, limiting their activities almost entirely to the care of their buffaloes and to the complicated ritual which has grown up in association with these animals. The Badagas are chiefly agriculturists; the Kotas are artisans and mechanics; and both supply the Todas with part of their produce. There is here a well-marked instance of division of labour, in which the labour of the Todas is reduced to a minimum. Their privileged position is usually held to be due to the tradition that they are the "lords of the soil," and the produce which the Todas receive from the other tribes is supposed to be of the nature of tribute.

The jungle on the slopes of the hills is inhabited by two wild, dwarfish tribes, the Kurumbas and Irulas, who have a general resemblance to the many other jungle tribes of Southern India. These people are much feared by the tribes of the plateau for their supposed magical powers, but they have little to do with the complex social life of the others.

101 131 177 The district in which the three tribes live is not extensive. The extreme length of the plateau, from east to west, is about forty-two miles, and its average breadth, from north to south, about ten miles, the maximum breadth being fifteen miles in the centre of the district. The total area of the plateau is less than 500 square miles. In this district there live about 800 Todas, 1,200 Kotas, and 34,000 Badagas. In addition, there are now extensive European settlements, the largest of which is Ootacamund, the seat of the Madras Government for six months of the year. The other large European settlements are Coonoor and Kotagiri, while Wellington, near Coonoor, is a military station.

The plateau of the Nilgiris is divided into four districts,

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The plateau of the Nilgiris is divided into four districts, ordinarily known by the names, Todanad, Mekanad, Peranganad, and Kundanad, and these districts are recognised by the Todas. The Todanad is the largest district, and is the part where the majority of the Todas live. Their own name for it is Marsâdr.

The Mekanad is called by the Todas Karâdr, and is now very sparsely inhabited, though there are many old villages in the district.

The Peranganad is the eastern part of the hills, and is called by the Todas Purgòdr, and is the chief seat of a few of their clans.

The fourth district, or Kundanad, is that already mentioned as the Kundahs in the south-west part of the hills. It is the chief seat of one Toda clan, but it also contains villages belonging to others. It is especially visited in the dry season, since its large rainfall often provides ample pasturage when this is burnt up on other parts of the hills. The Toda name of the district is Mêdr.

A few Todas live near Gudalur in the Wainad, some 3,000 feet lower than the main plateau.

METHODS

The description of Toda life to be given in this book is the outcome of an attempt to apply rigorous methods in the investigation of sociology and religion. In the brief time which was at my disposal, it was essential to employ methods of investigation which would enable me to tell with some certainty whether I was obtaining accurate and trustworthy information. Two great sources of error in anthropological investigation are the dependence on the evidence of only a few individuals and the necessity of paying for information.

The first source of error was easily avoided, and I was able to obtain my information from a large body of witnesses, usually independently of one another. As regards the second source, the Todas are inveterate beggars, and are now thoroughly accustomed to receive payment for every service rendered to the European, even of the most trivial kind. Payment for information was inevitable, but I

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618 621 Each clan possesses a group of villages and takes its name from the chief of these villages, the *etudmad*, and the people of a clan are known as *madol*, or village people.

●101 174 616 618 The Tartharol are divided into twelve clans, which take their names from the villages of Nòdrs, Kars, Pan, Taradr, Keradr, Kanòdrs, Kwòdrdoni, Päm, Nidrsi, Melgars, Kidmad, and Karsh.[1] The people of each clan are known as Nòdrsol, Karsol, Panol, &c. The Kidmadol and Karshol are much less important than the other ten clans, having split off from the Melgarsol in comparatively recent times. The original number of Tarthar clans appears to have been ten, and I have no record that any clan of this division has become extinct.

The Teivaliol are divided into six clans, or *madol*, taking their names from the villages of Kuudr, Piedr, Kusharf, Keadr, Pedrkars, and Kulhem. The people of Kuudr are called both Kuudrol and Kuurtol, and similarly the people of Piedr and Keadr are often called the Piertol and Keartol.

Here again two clans, the Pedrkarsol and the Kulhemol, are less important than the others. They are offshoots of the Kuudrol, but the separation is of very long standing.

There was some doubt as to the existence of another clan, the Kwaradrol, but it seemed certain that these people, who have now died out, formed a subdivision of the Keadrol.

One Teivali clan has become extinct, its last member having died, it was said, about a hundred years ago. This clan took its name from the village of Kemen, which was near Kiudr, but no trace of this village exists at present and I think it probable that the Kemenol have been extinct longer than the Todas suppose.

166 361 621 The villages of each clan are usually situated in the same part of the hills, though there are very often outlying villages far from the main group. At any one period of the year, only some of the villages of the clan are occupied. The people may move about from one village to another accord-

[1] In these names and throughout the text the signs to indicate long vowels are generally omitted. In order to ascertain the exact method of pronunciation, the map or the list of villages in Appendix III. should be consulted.

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still in use. Thus the people of Pirspurs have now become the Pämol and the Kusharfol are often named after Umgas, a village in more frequent use than Kusharf. In general the villages belonging to a clan are situated in the same part of the hills, but a clan often possesses outlying villages at a considerable distance from the chief group. Sometimes these outlying villages are of comparatively recent origin, and in other cases they have been established on account of grazing necessities; thus several clans which have their chief seats near Ootacamund have villages in the Kundahs or in the district near Makurti Peak, which are visited in the dry season.

The members of a clan have many common rights and privileges which bind them together, so that the clan-tie has a very real meaning. Property, however, as we shall see shortly, is largely centred in the family or the individual, and the Todas are in a state of social evolution in which the common bond constituted by membership of the clan has been largely replaced by the bond constituted by the family. They are in an intermediate condition between the state of society in which the clan is the social unit and that in which the family has taken this position.

Nearly all who have previously written about the Todas have described them as divided into five clans—viz., the Peiki, Pekkan, Kenna, Todi, or Tothi, and Kuttan. These are the five divisions recognised by the Badagas, and a Badaga knows each Toda as belonging to one of them. The Todas are also perfectly acquainted with these divisions, and they could always say, if asked, to which of them a given village or a given man belonged. If a Toda is asked by a European to which clan or division he belongs, he will probably give one of these names, but I do not believe that they are in use among themselves, being reserved for their intercourse with Badagas and other Indian castes and with Europeans.

The Peiki of the Badaga classification are the Teivaliol; the Pekkan correspond to the Melgarsol, the people of Kidmad and Karsh being also usually included in this group. Kenna is the Badaga name of the Karsol; the Todi or Tothi include two clans, the Nodrsol and the Panol, while the Kuttan com-

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101 prise the remainder of the Tarthar clans—viz., those of Taradr,
177 Keradr, Kanòdrs, Kwòdrdoni, Pām and Nidrsi. I could
618 obtain no direct information from the Todas which would
616 explain why the Badaga classification should differ from their own. It is possible that it is an old classification of the Todas, but this is unlikely, since it is probable that the intercourse with the Badagas is not very ancient. It seems to me possible that it may have arisen out of the constitution of the *naim* or council. This has four Toda representatives belonging to Kuudr (representing the Teivaliol), Kars, Nòdrs and Taradr. This would correspond to four of the Badaga divisions, and the fifth, the Melgarsol or Pekkan, would certainly be well known to the Badagas through their privileges as *mòrol*. It is possible that the Nòdrs representative used also to represent Pan, and that the Taradr member represented the remaining clans, and, if so, it would point to there having been some old five-fold division of the kind believed in by the Badagas. It is quite clear that the five-fold division has no influence on the marriage regulations and Peiki, Todi and Kuttan all marry freely within their divisions. Except in connexion with the *naim*, I could learn of nothing which would show that the five-fold division has any social significance, and I know of no other way in which the Panol are associated with the Nòdrsol nor of any other way in which the six clans included in the Kuttan are associated together. It is possible that the five-fold division is connected with some customs regulating the payment of the Badaga tribute to the Todas, but I could learn nothing of such customs.

618 Each clan has divisions of two kinds called *kudr* and *pòlm*. The *kudr* is a division of ceremonial, the *pòlm* of practical, importance.

THE KUDR

Normally each clan has two *kudr* and two only, and, as we have seen in Chapter XIII, these divisions become of the greatest importance in connexion with the *irnörtiti* ceremony, the whole regulation of which is dominated by the division into *kudr*. So far as I could ascertain, the *kudr* has now no

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101 551 The various tribes on the hills have secret names; thus, both Badagas and Tamils are called *tutâr katvai*, he who wears or ties the turban; a Kota is called *kîmas ithvai*, he who is beneath; a Kurumba is called *âr kârthpol*, the man who watches the way; a European is called *pelthpol*, or white man. A forest guard is called *petuni ütvai*, *petuni* being here used as a term for uniform, so that if a forest guard has come, they will say, *petuni ütvai podvuchi*.

195 198 Several of the words used in the secret language do not appear to have any other meaning and are not ordinarily used. Thus the ordinary word for tooth is *pars*, but in secret language *kâtô* or *kâtû* is used. This word is the name of the wall of a buffalo-pen and it is possible that it may mean stones, but I could not ascertain whether this was the derivation, and could only learn that it was another word for tooth. Similarly the ear, of which the ordinary name is *kevi*, is called *pertars*, and the question "Did you wear gold earrings?" becomes *pertarsk ütshia*? "to ear did you wear?"

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CHAPTER XXVII

RELATIONS WITH OTHER TRIBES

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IN this chapter I propose to put together the chief facts with which I am acquainted which throw light on the very difficult problem of the relations between the Todas and the other tribes of the Nilgiri Hills. The chapter could only be written with any degree of completeness by one who had studied the question from the point of view of each of the Nilgiri tribes separately. I have only been able to do so, and that incompletely, from the Toda point of view. My information is derived almost wholly from the Todas themselves, and gives their way of regarding the relations between themselves and the other tribes.

The five tribes inhabiting the Nilgiri Hills are shown in Fig. 68 (taken from Breeks), the Todas in the centre with the Badagas on their right and the Kotas on their left. Next to the Badagas are the Irulas, and next to the Kotas are the Kurumbas.

The tribes with which the Todas come into contact habitually are the Badagas and Kotas, while their points of contact with Kurumbas and Irulas are much less important. The Badagas are not only the agriculturists of the Todas, but are the constant intermediaries between the Todas and the extra-Nilgiri world. The two tribes regard each other more or less as social equals. The Kotas, on the other hand, who are the artisans of the Todas, are regarded by them as social inferiors. The relations with the former may be considered first.

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FIG. 68 (FROM BREEKS).—THE FIVE TRIBES OF THE NILGIRI HILLS.

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TODAS AND BADAGAS

101 The Todas call a Badaga *Mav*,[1] which seems to be a form of the Canarese word for father-in-law or maternal uncle. The origin of this term is said to have been that when the Todas first met a Badaga, they asked his name and he answered "*Mav*." A Badaga who performs certain services for the *palol* is called *tikelfmav*. Certain elders of the Badagas are also called *madtin*.

177 609

Whenever a Toda meets a Badaga *monegar* (headman) or an old Badaga with whom he is acquainted, a salutation passes between the two which is represented in Fig. 69. The Toda stands before the Badaga, inclines his head slightly, and says "*Madtin pudia!*" ("*Madtin*, you have come.") The Badaga replies "*Buthuk! buthuk!*" ("Blessing, blessing") and rests his hand on top of the Toda's head. This greeting only takes place between Todas and the more important of the Badaga community. It would seem that every Badaga headman may be greeted in this way, but a Toda will only greet other Badaga elders if he is already acquainted with them. The salutation is made to members of all the various castes of the Badagas except the Torayas. It has been held to imply that the Todas regard the Badagas as their superiors, but it is doubtful how far this is the case. The Todas themselves say they follow the custom because the Badagas help to support them. It seems to be a mark of respect paid by the Todas to the elders of a tribe with which they have very close relations, and it is perhaps significant that no similar sign of respect is shown to Toda elders by the Badagas.

177 651

The Badagas perform definite services for the Todas and give what may be regarded as a tribute of grain at the harvest. The tribute is called *gudu*. I did not myself investigate the nature of the *gudu*, and there is some difference of opinion among previous writers[2] as to whether a definite amount of grain

[1] *Mav* is also the Toda word for sambhar.

[2] According to Harkness, "each burgher, hamlet, or village" gives about two quarts (p. 108), or (p. 135) half a bushel to the *ti* and half a bushel to the other Todas. According to Breeks (p. 9), the *gudu* is about one-tenth, one-eighth, or one-fifth of the gross produce.

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at least one recent case, been adopted by a Toda, and the threat of suicide by this means is said to be fairly common. 762

There is no doubt that the Badagas believe in the powers of the Toda sorcerers. I was told of several definite instances in which misfortunes were believed to have been brought upon the Badagas in this way, and there is little doubt that, in one case, the supposed author of the death of a child was murdered by the Badagas. 177 754 787

If a Badaga suspects magical influence of this kind he may consult one of the Toda diviners, showing that the Badagas believe in Toda divination as well as in Toda sorcery.

It is probable that the relations between the Todas and Badagas have existed for very long. It is generally held that the Badagas are comparatively recent immigrants to the Nilgiri Hills. Breeks[1] states that the Badagas are said to have come to the hills about three centuries ago in consequence of the troubles that followed the fall of Vijayanagar, but it is certain that they have been on the hills much longer than this, for the account of Finicio in 1602 (see App. I) shows that the relations between Todas and Badagas were much the same then as they are now. The close connexion of Badagas with the *ti* dairies, their intermediation between the *palol* and the Hindu, and the fact that the *palol* must eat Badaga grain, are all indications of very ancient relations between the two tribes. 177 174

There is one fact which may be held to show that the relation between Todas and Badagas is recent as compared with that between the Todas and other Nilgiri tribes. This is the fact that the Badagas are not mentioned in one of the legends of the Toda gods, while Kotas, Kurumbas, and Irulas each play a part in one or more of these stories.

Todas and Kotas

The Toda name for a Kota is *Kwv*. The relation between the two people is very different from that between Toda and [101] 177

[1] P. 4.

1; Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

177 Badaga. While a Toda regards a Badaga as his equal, or
186 perhaps even as his superior, he looks down on the Kota as
609 inferior, as hardly to be classed as a man with himself. In their secret language, a Toda speaks of a Kota as *kimas ithvai*, "he that is beneath," and in the remedies for the evil eye (see p. 264) the Kotas are the only hill tribe which is not thought worthy of mention—they are not thought to be of sufficient importance to be able to cast the evil eye. When a Kota meets a Toda, he raises both hands to his face and salutes from a distance. The two people do not touch one another in general, though I do not know that contact is definitely prohibited. A Toda will not sleep or take food at a Kota village in general, but makes an exception in the case of Kulgadi in the Wainad (see p. 200). It is usually supposed that the contempt of the Toda for the Kota is due to the flesh-eating, or even carrion-eating, habits of the latter, and this is certainly one of the elements which influence the relations between the two peoples.

177 The Kotas supply the Todas with the larger part of their
437 pottery and ironware.[1] All the earthenware vessels of the dairies, except those of the inner rooms of the *ti* dairies, are supplied by the Kotas, and the various knives and other metal objects of the Todas are chiefly obtained from these people. The Kotas supply most of the things burnt at Toda funerals and they supply the music on these occasions.

Just as the Badagas do not supply grain to the Todas only, so the Kotas do artisan work for Badagas, Kurumbas, and Irulas. The Kotas are the artisans, not of the Todas only, but of the whole hill district.

101 The relations between the Todas and Kotas are strictly
177 regulated, each Kota village supplying certain Toda clans.
437 There are seven Kota villages on the hills, of which the following are the Toda and Badaga names:—

In the Todanad district:—

Tizgudr, Tizgadr, or Tizgwadr (Badaga, Tirichigadi), between Ootacamund and Kanòdrs, near the Toda village of Ushadr.

[1] According to Breeks, the Kotas who supply the Todas are known as *wuffu* Kotas.

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Kurguli (B. Padagula or Kuruvoje), near the Badaga village of Sholur. 101 177

In the Mekanad district:—

Kalmal (B. Kolamala or Kollimalai), not far from Kateri. 437

In the Peranganad district:—

Meilkukal (B. Melkotagiri or Perangada) in Kotagiri, one of the three chief European stations on the hills. Kikukal (B. Kilkotagiri or Kinnada), north-east of Kotagiri.

In the Kundanad district:—

Medrkukal (B. Menada).

The seventh is Kulgadi (B. Kalagasa) at Gudalur in the Wainad.

The village of Tizgudr is connected with the Toda clans of Kars, Melgars, Kanòdrs, and sometimes with the people of Kulhem. Kurguli supplies the clans of Nòdrs, Taradr, Kuudr, Piedr, and Kusharf, and occasionally Kulhem. Kalmal supplies Keradr, Nidrsi, Pàm, Kidmad, and Keadr. Meilkukal and Kikukal are both connected with Kwòdrdoni and Pedrkars, and Medrkukal is the Kota village of the Panol. Kulgadi is connected only with the village of Kavidi, near Gudalur, which belongs to the Piedrol. When there were several Toda villages in the Wainad, it probably served them all.

The connexion between clans and villages seems to depend almost wholly on geographical distribution. The clans are supplied by the Kota villages which are nearest to their headquarters. An outlying village such as Kavidi has not the same Kota village as the rest of its clan. The Kidmadol, who are a branch of the Melgarsol, have not the same Kota village as the parent stock; but, on the other hand, the Panol, who now live chiefly among other Todas near Governor Shola, are still connected with the Kundah Kotas.

Each Kota village is responsible for the supply of the clan or clans with which it is connected. Its inhabitants make the various utensils used in the household and in the less sacred dairy work of the Todas. At the funeral of any member of a clan with which they are connected, they provide the music and the following objects:— 177 437 764

At the *etvainolkedr*, a cloak in which the corpse is wrapped,

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TODAS AND KURUMBAS

The Toda name for a Kurumba is *Kurub*, which often sounds like *Kurb*. In the secret language, a Kurumba is called *ðr kðrthpol*, "the man who watches the way." Mr. Thurston states that when a Kurumba meets a Toda, he bends forward and the Toda places his hand on the Kurumba's head. The Todas may visit Kurumba villages and take food in them.

Two ceremonial objects are obtained by the Todas from the Kurumbas. One is the tall pole called *tadrsi* or *tadri*, which is used in the dance at the second funeral ceremonies and afterwards burnt. Poles of the proper length are said to grow only on the Malabar side of the Nilgiris and are probably most easily obtained from the Kurumbas. The other is the *teiks*, or funeral post at which the buffalo is killed, which is probably made of teak wood.

The most striking feature of the relations between Todas and Kurumbas is the belief of the former in the magical powers of the latter, a belief which is shared by both Kotas and Badagas. The sorcery of the Toda is dangerous, but can be remedied, while for *kurubudrchiti*, or Kurumba sorcery, there is no remedy, and all that can be done is to kill the Kurumba, apparently to avoid further evil consequences to the community rather than from motives of revenge.

The Kurumbas play no part in the social life of the Todas. With the one exception of providing the funeral pole, I could not learn that they had any functions at Toda ceremonies. It was said that the *teuol*, Pangudr, who was believed to be inspired by Kwoto, must dance, *i.e.*, divine, to the Kurumbas before he dances to the Todas, and when so doing, must dance like a lame man, this behaviour owing its origin to the god Kwoto (see p. 209). It is possible that this shows that the Kurumbas believe in Toda divination and consult the diviners.

The Kurumbas are mentioned in several Toda legends. According to one account, it was this people whom Kwoto deceived, making them eat the flesh of a buffalo calf,

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177 according to another, it was the Panins or Panyas who were
773 deceived by the god.

Kwoten is said to have initiated the practice of allowing Todas to visit Kurumba villages, and he appears to have been closely connected, in some way, with the Kurumbas, who still offer plantains to Terkosh and light lamps in her honour, Terkosh being the goddess who was connected with his disappearance and deification.

174 In the story of Kuzkarv, the Kurumbas, together with the
177 Irulas, collect honey for the Todas from nests in a tree,[1] and
773 this seems to point to a time when these tribes took an active part in the social life of the Todas. It seems possible that the Kurumbas and Irulas were the huntsmen of the Todas, and sought roots and honey for them, just as the Badagas were the agriculturists and the Kotas the mechanics.

TODAS AND IRULAS

101 The Irulas live on the lower slopes of the Nilgiri Hills and
177 have few relations with the Todas. They are called *Erl* by
609 the Todas, and, according to Mr. Thurston, they are saluted
754 in the same way as the Kurumbas. The Irulas are among the people mentioned in the remedial formula used against the effects of the evil eye, and are evidently regarded as having some magical power, though they are not feared in the same measure as the Kurumbas.

177 The name of the Irulas only occurs once in my collection
773 of Toda legends, in the story of Kuzkarv, where they are associated with the Kurumbas. Atioto, who is the special deity of Kwòdrdoni and Pedrkars, is said to have a temple of which the priest is an Irula. This is probably an Irula temple to which the Todas make offerings.

[1] It is perhaps noteworthy that some of the Kurumbas of Malabar are still noted for their cleverness in collecting honey, and are known as *Tēn* or honey Kurumbas (Fawcett, *Bull. Madras Museum*, iii, p. 9).

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the Toda clans take their names, the Tarthar villages being in Roman type and those of the Teivaliol in italics. I have omitted the chief villages of those clans which I know to have arisen in recent times by splitting off from other clans, and I have included two villages of which I can only give the approximate positions. These are Piedr and Kusharf, which are now rarely occupied, and are situated off the main plateau, near the Badaga village of Hullatti. I also give

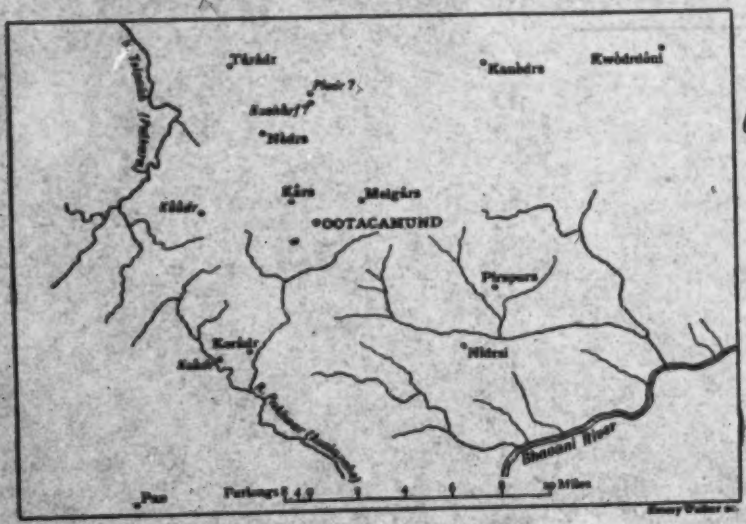

FIG. 73.

Pirspurs, the old *etudmad* of the Pämol. In Fig. 74 I give a second plan, showing the positions of all the villages which I know to be ancient, either because they possess sacred dairies or because they are mentioned in legend.

It will be seen that the greater part of the hills is occupied by the Tartharol, while the Teivali villages lie chiefly in the north-west part of the hills. The chief exception is the village of Keadr, which is situated some way south of the rest.

If, in coming to the hills, the Todas followed the routes now supposed to be traversed by the dead, the position of

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Keadr would suggest that this clan was assigned a seat soon after the Teivaliol had crossed the Pakhwar, and that the others journeyed on northwards.

The plans certainly make it clear that there is a difference in the geographical distribution of the two divisions, and the nature of this distribution is consistent with the advent of the two divisions at different times. It will be noticed in both plans that one Tarthar clan has its seat in the middle

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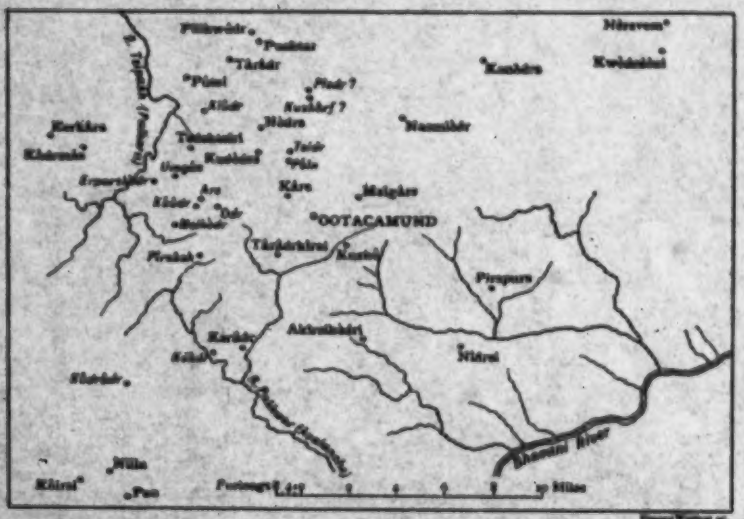

FIG. 74.

of what would otherwise be exclusively a Teivali district. This clan is that of Taradr, and it is perhaps significant that the Taradrol have many features which differentiate them from Tarthar clans in general, especially in their possession of the *kugvalir* and in the possession of their own Amnòdr, though, as we have seen, the latter feature may merely be a later consequence of their isolated position.

It is known that when two tribes coalesce to form a community, the inferior people may act as the sorcerers and wizards of the community. At the present time the majority of the *teuol*, or diviners, belong to the Teivaliol, but this branch of

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

that there is a close resemblance between the Toda language and Malayalam, minus its Sanscrit derivatives. 174

The Todas claim that their diviners, who, when in their frenzy, are believed to be inspired by the gods, speak the Malayalam language, some clans speaking a language which the Todas say is that of people they call Mondardsetipol, living in Malabar. I do not know whether the Toda claim is justified, but in any case the belief exists that the diviners speak the languages of Malabar, and that these are the languages of the gods. It is possible that in their beliefs concerning the language of the gods the Todas may be preserving a tradition of their mother-tongue, and if it could be proved that the diviners actually speak the Malayalam language the link with Malabar would be very materially strengthened.[1] 197 198

The Todas believe that their dead travel towards the West and are able to describe the paths by which they pass. Here, again, there is some reason to think that people may preserve in their beliefs about the passing to the next world a tradition of the route by which their ancestors travelled from a former home, and this may be so in the case of the Todas. 174 175

Another fact linking the Todas with Malabar is the use of the tall pole called *tadri* in the funeral ceremonies. This pole is procured for the Todas from the Malabar side of the hills by the Kurumbas, and I was told that suitable poles only grew in Malabar, and the pole is adorned with cowries which are also probably of Malabar origin. Other objects burnt at the funeral, such as the boxes called *pettei* and the umbrella called *miturkwadr*, are also procured from Malabar. The use of objects in funeral ceremonies which are procured from Malabar is suggestive, though, taken alone, it would have little significance. 174 177 437

A fact which would perhaps be regarded by most as more important is that there is now a settlement of the Todas at Gudalur in the Wainad, on one of the routes from Malabar to the Nilgiris. It seems clear that at one time the settlement 101 361 174

[1] It is perhaps worth noting that at present only Teivali diviners are reputed to speak Malayalam.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

101 was larger than it is at present, and it is tempting to suppose
174 that we have here evidence of the route of the Toda migration.
There are, however, facts which make it improbable that this
361 clue is of any value. If the villages about Gudalur had been survivals of the migration they would almost certainly have been sacred villages, but it was quite clear that they had no sanctity whatever and were not even saluted when seen from a distance. Unfortunately I did not visit Kavidi, the only village which remains, and if I had done so I might have discovered some evidence of sanctity and antiquity, but from what I was told it is very unlikely that any such evidence exists. This absence of sanctity is further in agreement with the traditions of the Todas, who say that the settlement at Gudalur is recent. There are, however, other facts which point to an ancient connexion of the Todas with this district. Some of the buffaloes of the most sacred and ancient Nòdrs *ti* are said to have come from Perithi in the Wainad, and the Taradrol, in many ways an exceptional Toda clan, are said to have their own future world or Amnòdr at this place.

174 It will thus be seen that, in addition to the points of similarity in custom and belief, there are definite facts pointing
487 to connexion with Malabar, and if we suppose that the Todas migrated from this district we have next to conjecture the path by which they travelled. If any importance is attached to the belief in the paths taken by the dead, we should regard it as the most probable view that the Todas travelled over the Kundahs, the two divisions of the people travelling by slightly different routes. The Toda tradition that men were created on the Kundahs is perhaps in favour of this route, which would seem to correspond with the road to the Nilgiris known as the Sisipara Ghat. If, on the other hand, we attach importance to the settlement at Kavidi, the route followed would be that through Gudalur. At the present time the latter road is far the easier of the two, and, if the Todas had travelled during the last few years, it would have been the natural road by which to come, but it does not appear that there was any essential difference in the difficulties of the two routes before the roads were made. The evidence in favour of either route is very scanty, but if the Todas came from

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

A PHRENOLOGIST

AMONGST

THE TODAS.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL OUTLINE.

Meaning of the Name Toda—Names of Clans—Kôls, the Aborigines of India—Todas are Drâvidians—Drâvidians penetrate India, and dispossess the Kôl Race—Affinities of the Drâvidians—Âryan Conquest; its Effects on the Kôl and Drâvidian Races—The mutual Influence of the Kôl, Drâvidian, and Âryan Races on one another—Positions in India now held by the three Races—Positions in the Dekhan of the Drâvidian Tribes—Affinities of the Toda Dialect—Last Migration of the Todas—Kairns and Kromlechs on the Nilagiris—Are the Kairn-builders allied to the Todas?

THE PEOPLE whose ancient customs and primitive habits form the topic of these pages are called by the English Todas; but in their own language an individual of the tribe is Todan,[1] the plural being Todaru.

The Badagas—of whom more hereafter—who for centuries past have lived in close proximity to the Todas, style them in the singular Todawanu,[2] and in the plural Todawaru: from which, by abbreviation, Todawan or Todawar. Hence

[1] Todan. Tamil, Toṛavan and Tôṛam = *a herd*. And thus Toṛavan or Tôṛan = *herdsman*. [POPE.]

On this note, Mr. Metz remarks: 'As the d in Toda is not a lingual ḍ, but dental, I do not believe the word means *herdsman*, as Toḍa in Old Tamil. I do not know the meaning of Toda with the dental d.'

[2] Todawanu. Tora = *a herd*, Wanu = *a person*. Drâvidian. [POPE.]

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAP. I.

also have arisen other corruptions in English; as Torawar, Thautawars, Todars, Todies, &c. Dr. Hunter gives, in his Dictionary,[3] a Toḍuva variety of the Toḍu language; which is an error.

The Toda tribe is divided into five clans, called Pēiki, Pekkan, Tôdi, Kuttan, and Kenna.[4] The two first are very closely related, although they do not now intermarry; the former having become what might be termed a Levitical clan. All of the remaining four freely marry amongst one another.

We have very little positive information of the earliest inhabitants of India; but, so far as the existing condition of evidence enables us to determine, they were of a race whose speech, having analogies to the extensive Hô or Kôl group of languages, 'derived from a source common both to themselves and the Chinese,'[5] gives grounds for the belief that, at some extremely early prehistoric period, a migration of barbarians into India took place from over its north-eastern confines 'from the northern shores of the Indian Ocean and the Chinese Sea;'[6] thus *seemingly* earning for themselves the title of children of the soil, the aboriginal inhabitants of at least the central and north-eastern tracts of India.

The physical type of this race, judging from the many distinct tribes of the family still to be found in various hill ranges, partook of the main features of the Mongol—in the hairless face, broad and short, the spreading unshapely nose, small eyes and high cheek-bones: and evidences of the people exist even in the southern portion of the Indian peninsula, both in the presence of this peculiar stamp of countenance, and apparently in the names of places and of natural features of the country.

The Toda tongue is entirely apart from that of the Kôl

[3] Hunter, 'Comparative Dictionary of the Non-Aryan Languages of India and High Asia.'

[4] Mr. Metz writes me that he believes he has found a sixth clan, called Târâl.; but the statement needs confirmation.

[5] Hunter. [6] Hunter.

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

remain in their pristine barbarous state; innocent even of written characters; and there are said to be several other minor dialects or corruptions belonging to small sylvan families holding unimportant geographical positions in the Drâvidian area.

Remnants of the ejected Kôls are shown on the eastern limits, and Âryanised peoples are closed in on the entire northern boundary.

The Rev. Dr. Pope, in his contribution to this book,[12] gives it as his opinion that the Toda language was originally old Kanarese, and not a distinct dialect. He thinks that the language has dwindled to a mere skeleton, as a result of isolation and consequent degeneration of the people.

The early Indian history of the Todas has been as completely lost as that of the long protracted period which preceded their migration to the Dekkan.

We know, indeed, with a tolerable degree of certainty, both from their own legends and from those of neighbouring tribes, that until the last few hundred years they inhabited a jungle tract of inferior hills situated between the Kanarese and Tamilian districts, in the direction of Hâsanûr; which, on E. longitude 77° 20′ and N. latitude 11° 45′ form portion of the Eastern Ghats. And that they then divided into two or more parts, of which one settled in a northerly direction, near Kôlegâll, and the other migrated or was driven in the direction of the Nilagiri Mountain;[13] the greater number

[12] Vide Chapter XXIX., 'Outlines of the Tuḍa Grammar.'

At the time of recording this opinion, Dr. Pope had not had opportunity of perusing any portion of my descriptions of Toda life. Had he done so, it is possible he might have modified his views. I, who judge the Todas physically and through their antique customs and practices, fail to discover any degeneracy in the people; rather regarding them as not only without evidence of having been better, but with little appearance of having been materially different from what they now are, within any period whose length may be fixed or even approximated.

[13] Mr. Metz, who obtained this information from the Todas, is my authority for this paragraph.

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settling on its very topmost plateau, where we now find them, whilst a small remnant, winding behind its north-western slopes, remained on one of the lower plateaus, called the Wynâd.

This modern place of Toda residence is an isolated mountain, upwards of seven thousand feet above sea level, upreared on E. longitude 76° 45′ and N. latitude 11° 20′, amidst the plains of South India—the gigantic and sudden culmination of the minor mountain-chain system, called the Eastern and Western Ghats, which there meet.

These, their last movements, having been very small and of minor importance, I have included their past and their present places of residence in one area, marked VI. on the map.

Not only the summit of the Nilagiris, but the tops of the minor rounded eminences thereon, are studded with kairns, raised for the reception of ashes of the dead, by a race whose history has been so completely lost that not a tradition even of it remains. On the same plateau are also a few kromlechs, also many deserted circles of stones, situated near streams of running water; some manifestly constructed for pounding cattle, others, with equal certainty, not made for that purpose —being in exposed situations and having rocky beds.

These erections undoubtedly do not belong to the Todas, who not only do not regard them with reverence, but assert that they were of a people antecedent to themselves on the mountain. Moreover they are found in many parts of the Indian peninsula and of Western India. But I may do service in drawing attention to points in which the cremation customs of this unknown race are those of the Todas, and to those in which they differ from them.

In brief, we find, from relics exhumed from kairns, that their owners made use of the horse: that they practised agriculture, holding the buffalo in high esteem, and burying its bell with the manes of the deceased. We learn that they were acquainted with the use of the spear, bow and arrow:

183 of wood, dotted with isolated hummocks like giant ant-hills, and terminating in faint blue lines of mountains the furthest of which seems to hang half-way up the sky; perhaps on a tumbled mass of hills and valleys, a perfect dissolving view, for the eye has hardly traced the outline of some rocky ridge, glowing red in the sunlight, before a blue cloud-shadow blots it out, and a fresh series of crests and ravines starts into sight beyond. Broken peaks, hung with woods, frame the picture, and on all lies tropical sunlight, intensified by the keen thin mountain air.

132 The climate is temperate and equable. At Ootacamund, according to a series of observations, extending over seven years, the mean maximum temperature ranges from 60·06° in December to 68·76° in May. The hottest months of the year are April and May, the coldest, December and January. The hottest hours of the day in summer and winter do not vary more than nine degrees, and the extreme variation of temperature throughout the year is only 21·25°.

The climate of Coonoor and Kotagherry is warmer; no observations have been recorded for the Kúndahs. The average rainfall at Ootacamund is about 45 inches, but it is much greater on the Kúndahs, and generally on the western side of the plateau, which feels the full force of the S.W. monsoon.

Early in June this monsoon breaks with great violence on the western face of the mountains, but diminishes in violence as it extends eastward. At Ootacamund it is much milder than on the Kúndahs, and at Coonoor and Kotagherry it is but slightly felt. It lasts until about the middle of September. The north-east monsoon, which commences in the middle or end of October, bursts heavily on the north-east corner of the plateau, and the first fall usually extends over the whole of it. At Ootacamund, from December to May, the weather is dry and very bright; the winter nights bring sharp frosts in the swampy valleys, but on higher ground these are little felt, and English garden and greenhouse flowers may be had in profusion all the year round. The average number of days on which rain falls at Ootacamund in the course of the year is said to be 100, of cloudy days without rain 28, and of clear fine days 237.

D1 The Nílagiris are divided into four *nádu* or divisions, named respectively—

Todanád.
Mekenád.
Perangenád.
Kúndanád.

They are inhabited by five native tribes, viz.:—

Badagas.
Todas.
Kotas.
Kurumbas.
Irulas.

Of these, the Badagas, although far the most numerous, not being an aboriginal or jungle race, do not come within the scope of the following pages, which will be devoted to an account of the four primitive tribes, and of the rude stone monuments, of uncertain origin, which are found in various parts of the plateau.

The Badagas are Hindus, chiefly of the Saiva sect, and are supposed to have migrated to the Nilagiris from Mysore, about 300 years ago, after the breaking-up of the kingdom of Vijayanagar. According to the last Census they numbered 19,476. They are an agricultural race, and cultivate various cereals of rather a poor sort. They hold their lands under Government at very easy rates, and of late years many of them have acquired considerable wealth, and own large herds of cattle. They pay a sort of tribute, in grain, to the Todas. Their language is a corrupt form of Kanarese.

101 ● 177

3; Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

the principle of the "Universal Alphabet" proposed by Dr. Lepsius.* The actual adoption of Lepsius's system seems to me undesirable, because the great number of sounds it comprises, and the consequent complexity of diacritical signs used, are not requisite for Indian vocabularies, and would be unnecessarily bewildering to amateur compilers.

I would suggest that the Government of Madras, for instance, should endeavour to obtain the services of such men as Dr. Caldwell, Dr. Pope, and Mr. Metz, to draw up a table of signs which should represent all the sounds to be found in the different dialects of the Presidency. This list might be then forwarded to the other Provinces, in order that philologists there might add letters expressive of any sounds in Northern languages which are not found in the Dravidian dialects. When a general alphabet had been agreed upon, it should be sent to every district as the basis for vocabularies of the ruder and less known dialects. If the vocabularies thus formed, were again submitted to competent philologists for correction of the orthographical errors, into which ignorance of derivation might lead compilers, they would afford a reliable basis for the comparative philology of India.

The vocabulary in the Appendix is simply an attempt to render correctly, with due regard to derivations, the sounds of certain words in the Hill dialects; it has no pretensions to anything more.†

The Todas have hardly a tradition or legend of any sort from which information as to their former condition can be obtained. They believe that their ancestors always inhabited these hills, that is (for their ideas on the subject seem chiefly negative) they have no knowledge or belief of their having migrated from elsewhere. Mr. Metz thinks the Todas came from the neighbourhood of Kāligāl (Collegāl), because he has often been asked for news of the relatives, who, they believe, still reside there. I cannot find, however, that any Todas are now known in that neighbourhood. Mr. Minchin informs me that there are three colonies of Todas in Wainād, one at Dēvāla, and two on the eastern slopes of the Neliyālam Peak range. Those at Dēvāla, he says, reside in houses of bamboo, built with gable ends, like the huts of the Paniers, and occasionally work as house-builders for the bazaar people, but live chiefly by the sale of ghee and milk. They are Peikis, and say that they left the Nīlagiris sixty years ago to find a better sale for their produce. This account of themselves is confirmed by the fact, that within my own knowledge the dry funeral of two of them has been celebrated at the funeral-mand of the Peikis near Ootacamund.

Little more information is to be derived from foreign sources. The Badagas are said to have come to the hills in consequence of the troubles that followed the fall of Vijayanagar, *i.e.*, about three centuries ago; but their songs and stories depict the Todas much as we see them now. I think, however, we may infer that the latter were more numerous, from the fact of their having been able to exact the *gūdu* in the first instance, whereas now, with all the help afforded by long custom, they have at times difficulty in collecting it. Moreover, there are still traces to be found of old mands

* Such an alphabet is not open to the objections which historians and geographers urge with much reason against every method of transcribing names of places and other well-known oriental words which will render them unintelligible to the ordinary reader, because it is simply wanted for philological purposes.

† I believe that since the above was written the Government of India have authoritatively prescribed a system of transliteration, how obtained I do not know.—*Editor.*

4: King G-5 (no date) 1870 AW65 Toda AW60 Badaga AW50

fore, not hesitated to comply with the request made to me, that I would communicate such particulars concerning the hill-tribes of the Nilgiris as came under my own observation during a three years' sojourn on those hills, otherwise known as the Blue Mountains of the Deccan.

It is not necessary here to describe that well-known range further than to observe, for better understanding the situation of the tribes by whom it is inhabited, that it occupies a nearly isolated position, has a superficial extent calculated at between six and seven hundred square miles, and an extreme central altitude of 8,760 feet. Approaching them through the flat parched district of Coimbatoor, the great abruptness with which these mountains rise from the plain adds to their apparent height, and at a distance of many miles the grandeur of the lofty blue line elicits the admiration of the traveller. Arrived at the stifling village of Metapollium, at their base, and near the forest entrance of the ascent by the Coonoor Pass, gazing upwards on their hanging forests, rhododendron-sprinkled heights, and precipitous grey crags, towering almost perpendicularly to a height of 7,000 feet, one may fancy oneself enjoying a glimpse of another world. Notwithstanding the temptation which its lofty verdant summits must have offered to Europeans dwelling on the burning plains below, this range remained, chiefly on account of the then almost impenetrable belt of jungle, abounding in tigers and elephants, and surrounding its base on every side, unexplored till the year 1819, and it was not till two years later that any road was opened up to the summit.

Strange and unknown tribes were then found in possession of this favoured region, a region of green hills and sheltered hollows, of sparkling streams and tracts of primeval forest, with abundant vegetation and delightful climate. Todas and Khotas occupied the higher ranges, while Erulas and Kurumbas clustered here and there in the lower belts on the mountain sides.

These tribes I shall notice in order. Before, however, proceeding to do so, I may render my account plainer by briefly noticing another people who are located on the same ground, and in constant intercourse with the more immediate subjects of our notice, viz., the Vadacas or Badaghas, commonly called Burghers.

Though generally classed among the hill-tribes, they have, comparatively speaking, but recently come among them, having

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

feet high range of peaks that constitutes the culminating point reached from north to south by the Western Ghats, is visible in clear weather through a distinctly blue haze.

From the capital of the district, Ootacamund ("One-Stone House" in Tamil, shortened to *Ooty* by British residents), seat of the Government Administrator called the Collector, asphalted motor roads lead out in all directions over the grass-covered downs, which are interspaced here and there in the shallow parts with *sholas* or woods of short trees and bushes. The scenery is very beautiful, and the climate is excellent. Europeans from Madras city and from elsewhere, ever since the beginning of the 18th century, have made use of the station, the highest in India, from which to escape the insalubrious damp heat of the lowlands.

It is here on this green plateau that the Todas live. In their own language, they call themselves *Olkh*,[1] "men", their other name by which all outsiders know them, Toda, being from the Badaga language, *Toda-ma*, "chief". Their houses, *arsh*, which are of a particular kind, made of slit bamboo and planks and thatched, in the shape of Nissen huts, have no chimney and no windows worth mentioning, while the door is barely two feet high, obliging those who enter through it to crawl in on all fours. These dwellings are grouped in small numbers, never more than four or five at a time, forming *munds* (in Toda *mad*), and are scattered all over the hills, near sholas, and often very far away from each other. This spread appearance is apt to be deceptive to begin with, as it would seem that each "village" is practically independent, and leads a life of its own. Actually this is not the case, since, regardless of the distance which separates various munds from each other (often twenty miles and more), tribal divisions make it perfectly clear which hamlets belong together and which do not.

The people have a fine physical appearance. They are, on an average, generally taller than most Indians, the tallest Toda being something like six foot six. The men are profusely bearded, and wear their hair

[1] Romanization of Toda here will be in accordance with the following personal transcription:

ă = hat	ee = meet	ai = bite	l = lot	s = soon	v = vat
a = hut	f = fun	j = French	m = me	t = top	w = won
b = best	g = gone	dj = job	n = no	th = Greek theta	y = yoke
d = do	gh = Greek gamma	sh = she	o = hot	z = zero	
dh = Greek delta	tch = chap	ŏ = word	u = blue	è = simply tonic	
e = met	ng = ring	k = kit	oi = hoy	ù = cook	
ei = date	h = aspirate	kh = Greek chi	p = pot	oo = moon	
	i = hit		r = rot	ü = French	

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

No.	Name of *mads* (in Toda)	Men	Women	Children	Total
21	Patdhue	4	4	0	8
22	Karie	7	5	4	16
23	Norsh	11	13	4	28
24	Tavatkhiur	5	4	3	12
25	Kiudi	3	2	0	5
26	Kiur	2	2	4	8
27	Molkursh	5	3	0	8
28	Tivalkun	3	2	0	5
29	Pudmad	4	3	8	15
30	Artalkh	13	9	6	28
31	Tarar	13	10	8	31
32	Mortkiar	3	5	3	11
33	Konorj	4	3	3	10
34	Nirkh	3	2	4	9
35	Inkit	6	7	3	16
36	Kwordhoni	13	8	2	23
37	Pörgarsh	6	6	1	13
	Total	218	176	95 *	488

* Of which 44 were boys and 50 girls.

In 1952, the Toda population had further dropped to the all time low figure of 475, but at the time of writing (1954), it seems that in the last two years there have been 58 births and 21 deaths only, which now makes the total number of the tribe 512 – in marked progress away from the tragic trend towards extinction, which has been so pronounced since the days of Rivers. This author mentions a census taken in 1901 (*The Todas*, pp. 469 & 473), but since that date, no reliable figures are available. That was the reason for which I decided to make my own count of the Toda population. Kanvarsathi and I went round to every single *mad* in turn, and apart from recording persons present, obtained reliable information about those who were absent at the time of our visits.

Apart from Europeans, Indian Maharajas and their staffs, domestic servants and shopkeepers who have come up from the plains with them, and the Mysorean cultivators whose numbers are growing continually, other inhabitants of the Nilgiris, who are indigenous, like the Todas, are the Badagas, Kotas, Kurumbas, and Irulas. Their relations with the original Nilgiri tribe, who look upon themselves as the "Lords of the Soil", believing as they do, that they were created there by their

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

gods, are very close indeed; so close in fact that to know them really well it would be necessary to make a special study of them from the point of view of each of the five communities in turn. As others who have worked solely on the Todas before me, I am, however, only acquainted with these relations from the Toda viewpoint, and consequently can only briefly account for them here as described to me from that angle.

Of the four, the Badaga community is the largest. It is said, too, that it is the latest to have arrived in the Blue Mountains, but even so, this must have been quite a long time ago, as there are Portuguese descriptions of it going back for more than three centuries. The Todas consider the Badagas as practically their equals, and their name for them is *Mav*. They depend on them for much of their livelihood, as they are the agriculturists who supply them with grain, and all relations with the outer world are conducted to a large extent for the Todas through their intermediary. They pay a specified grain tribute called *kur* (Rivers' *gudu*) to the Todas, and the priests of the latter's most important temples may eat only Badaga grain (which includes rice) and none other. Furthermore a Badaga from the village of Tuneri is by right a member of the Toda tribal council, when it decides questions of inter-tribal importance, and at certain ceremonies in the principal temples, a Badaga, known as a *tikelvmav* has to be in attendance.

The Kotas, called *Kuv* by the Todas, are looked down upon by them and considered low-caste. They are the artisans who supply metalware and pottery to their neighbours, and, as is often the case with smiths in India, also music at festive occasions. They are indispensable at Toda funerals, where they have very distinct duties such as providing a band, giving cloth, grain, ceremonial bows and arrows, money etc. for the proper disposal of the corpse, besides taking away the sacrificed buffaloes which they eat.

The Kurumbas and Irulas are slight, dwarf-like aborigines who inhabit the forest-clad, malarial southern and western slopes of the Nilgiris. They are known respectively as *Kurub* and *Erl* by the Todas, who fear them greatly as sorcerers and magicians. It is on them, and principally the Kurumbas, that the tribe is dependent for its supply of bamboo vessels, of a certain long pole, the *tari*, used at funerals, and more especially of medicine, which appellation includes poison. The Todas make habitual use of the latter when they want to fight each other in personal or inter-clan feuds. In Toda mythology, the two last named of their neighbours as well as the Kotas, but not the Badagas, are mentioned.

4: Yalman E-4.5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese AX4
Toda AW60

carefully, because it provides an excellent example of how linguistic marriage categories systematic among themselves can be used in the organization of sexual and marital relations in a community. This has already been amply demonstrated for Ceylon. I shall argue that the Todas are in the same position. To put it quite directly, in these systems marriage and sexual relations are organized by linguistic kinship categories and not by any kind of exogamous lineages. Lineages and unilineal descent are secondary features and may or may not be found in conjunction with cross-cousin marriage rules.

In the remainder of this chapter I shall be concerned with an examination of the structural model constructed on the basis of Ceylonese evidence in certain South Indian contexts. I intend to demonstrate, first, that the same general structure applies in a large number of documented cases in South India irrespective of the patrilineal or matrilineal descent rules. Second, I shall attempt to demonstrate that special developments of unilineal descent have the same effect as in Ceylon—that is, they lead into hypergamy. In the limiting case, each unilineage turns into a ritual status group. Since the material, though abundant, is extremely uneven and at first sight quite confusing, I hope to further our understanding of these interesting structures. Let us now consider the Toda evidence.

THE TODAS

The Todas, though one of the classic tribes of anthropology, have been neglected in recent years. They inhabit the Nilgiri Hills, and from the first arrival of the Portuguese in the East Indies have excited curiosity and speculation. They inhabit a region populated by the Badaga (Cultivators), Kota (Funeral Musicians), and Kurumba (Sorcerers?). The largest section of the population is Badaga. The Toda numbered only 800 individuals at the time of Rivers' field work.

Rivers suggested that they were divided into two moieties; they could also be said to have two ritual groups: the Toda proper (*to:rdas*, see Emeneau) and the section of their priest, the *deva* (god) people (pronounced as *tevaliol*).[2]

They are pastoralists, and buffalo milk, apart from being very sacred, is one of the mainstays of their diet. All their lives and important institutions revolve around the buffalo. In their emergence myths, they come out of a hole in the ground holding onto buffalo tails! The Todas are created with their buffaloes, and the buffaloes, like

[2] See also D. Mandelbaum (1938). Mandelbaum describes how among the Kotas the priests do not belong to a separate division but are treated in such a way as to be cut off from the rest of Kota society. The Todas appear to have carried the distinction one step further.